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INFO RUCNAFG/AFGHANISTAN COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
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STATE FOR SCA/FO A/S BOUCHER AND SAS GASTRIGHT, SCA/A,
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STATE PASS TO USAID FOR AID/ANE, AID/DCHA/DG
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SUBJECT: PRT BAMYAN: GOVERNOR'S POLITICAL FOES INITIATE NEW
INVESTIGATION

REF: 06 KABUL 5654

11. (SBU) SUMMARY. Bamyan provincial governor Harabi Sarabi publicly disclosed that she is being investigated by the Attorney General,s office. Sarabi does not appear concerned about this investigation, which may have been initiated by her political opponents. END SUMMARY.

12. (SBU) At a March 12 meeting of the Bamyan Provincial Development Council, Governor Harabai Sarabi told the council that a group of 12 opponents has been spreading "negative propaganda" about her in Kabul with members of Parliament and at the Ministry of Interior. According to Sarabi, this group has alleged that she permitted the unlawful occupancy of privately owned land in Bamyan province, that she is allowing the promotion of Christianity, and that she improperly gave a sermon on the eve of the last Eid. Sarabi did not respond to these allegations in detail, except to say that she only offered her congratulations to the people of Bamyan on the occasion of Eid.

13. (SBU) When PRT commander and PRT officer went to the governor,s office later on March 12, Sarabi was meeting with two representatives of the Attorney General,s office from Kabul. Sarabi told us they had been interviewing her in connection with the allegations she had mentioned at the PDC meeting. Sarabi referred to the investigation in a light manner as "my persecution."

14. (SBU) Provincial Council director Haji Etemadi said during the March 12 meeting that he did not understand why people were making a big deal about Sarabi,s Eid remarks. (NOTE: While PC director Etemadi has a cordial relationship with Sarabi, he is not considered a political ally. END NOTE.) Sarabi responded that the people making accusations against her had decided to pursue their political agenda "on a religious front." At a March 14 meeting, PC member Mohammad Poya called the allegation "baseless," and said that those making such allegations should be investigated themselves.

Poya said that while there may be differences of opinion with Sarabi over development plans, it is not right for those who disagree with the governor to attack her personally.

15. (SBU) COMMENT. Last fall, two presidential advisors and a delegation from the Ministry of Interior investigated a series of complaints about Sarabi's performance raised by the governor's political opponents (reftel). As noted at that time, these complaints seemed to represent the opinion of a small group of the political "old guard" in Bamyan. Sarabi's reference to the initiators of the current investigation suggests that the same political opponents continue their efforts to undermine the governor, now using religion as a tool. Sarabi did not appear concerned about the investigation and members of the Provincial Council publicly downplayed the accusations against her. END COMMENT.
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